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Specifically, if the trench is filled with an HDP oxide layer, the capping layer 21 protects the oxidation barrier layer 20 from etching with argon. If the trench is filled with a USG layer instead of the HDP oxide layer, on an overall surface of the above resulting structure where the trench 17 is formed, plasma treatment is carried out to improve deposition characteristic of the USG layer. In this case, the oxidation barrier layer 20 may be damaged from plasma. The capping layer 21 prevents the damage of the oxidation barrier layer 20. The oxidation barrier layer 20 and capping layer 21 are formed to have a thickness of 20Å~300Å, respectively.

In the claims:

Please amend claim 10 as follows:

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10. (Amended) The method of Claim 8, wherein the oxidation barrier layer comprises silicon nitride with a thickness of 20Å~300Å.

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2 and 4-12 are pending in the present application.

The specification is objected to at paragraph 5 of the Office Action. Claim 10 and the specification at page 5 line 13 are amended to change "silicon oxide" to "silicon nitride". It is well known to those of skill in the art that the STI process employs a silicon nitride oxidation barrier layer. Accordingly no new matter is added by these amendments. Entry of the amendment and reconsideration of the objection to the specification are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, and 4-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Laparra *et al.* (U.S. 6,319,796 - hereinafter "Laparra") in view of Park *et al.* (U.S. 6,326,282 - hereinafter "Park") and Shin *et al.* (U.S. 6,184,077 - hereinafter "Shin"). It is requested that this rejection be reconsidered and removed in view of the following remarks.